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EVESHAM - Daniel Barbella and Mark Antonio have a lot in common.

Both are overachievers in school, outstanding athletes and both young men are excited to serve the country after receiving their appointments to West Point Military Academy.

On Wednesday, Congressman John Adler, D-3rd of Cherry Hill, honored the two Burlington County residents shortly after they received their acceptance call to join roughly 1,000 cadets nationwide in next year's incoming class.

"I'm honored to be selected," said Barbella, a Moorestown resident who attends school and is a member of the track team at St. Joseph's Preparatory School in Philadelphia. "I wanted to do something selfless. I didn't want this to be about me. I wanted it to be about the country."

Barbella and Antonio were invited to Adler's office on North Maple Avenue where the congressman presented both students with congressional certificates and flags that were flown over the U.S. Capitol. Barbella and Antonio were chosen over several applicants for a letter of recommendation from Adler. The two men were selected by Adler's Service Academy Selection Committee, which was made up of service academy alumni and veterans.

"I wasn't part of the actual process because I didn't want it to become political," Adler said. "These two young men were chosen by our committee on their own merit and were selected over many tremendous applicants. We wanted to choose two students who best represent our area for the military and these two stood out."

Antonio, a Mount Laurel resident who is a senior at Lenape High School in Medford, said the process of applying to West Point was long and difficult.

"The process started in March and over that time it has been a challenge to keep my grades up," said Antonio, who is a member of Lenape's wrestling team. "It was difficult but that's what makes it worth it."

Both men were rewarded with praise from their parents, who shared in the joyous afternoon.

"I'm very proud of him," said Barbella's mother, Sarah Barbella. "He has put this first before anything and he got it. He's a great son."

Antonio's father Richard said his son has already blazed a trail for the younger members in the family.

"Mark's younger brother (Stephen) is a junior and is starting his application to West Point soon," Richard Antonio said. "I would have been proud of Mark anyway even if he wasn't selected but

this is a great honor."